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ABSTRACT

This book is written for children 5 through 10. Part of a series designed to develop their curiosity, fascinate them and educate them, this volume describes: (1) the eight species of bears, including black bear, brown bear, grizzly bear, spectacled bear, sun bear, sloth bear, polar bear, and giant panda; (2) geographical habitats of bears; (3) survival techniques; and (4) relationship to humans. (YP)

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YOUNG DISCOVERY LIBRARY

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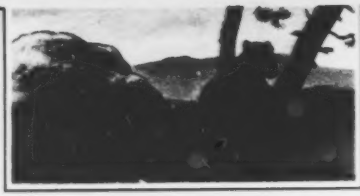

Written by Pierre Pfeffer
Illustrated by Franck Stéphan

Specialist Adviser:
George B. Robinson
Chief of Interpretation
Yellowstone National Park

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Bears, Big and Little

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YOUNG DISCOVERY LIBRARY

There are many stories about lovable bears.
Their big round heads make them look cute and cuddly. They may seem roly-poly under their furry coats, but bears are very strong and can move fast. Prehistoric man was more afraid of the cave bear than he was of lions or mammoths! Bears have not changed very much since those times.

Watch out for that paw! It is a powerful weapon with its five toes and long claws! Bears are **plantigrade**. That means they walk with their feet flat on the ground. Bears walk and run on all fours, but they can also take a few steps while standing on their hind legs.

1) North Pole
2) Europe, Asia, North America
3) North America
4) South America

There are eight species of bears in the world:

Polar bear
1

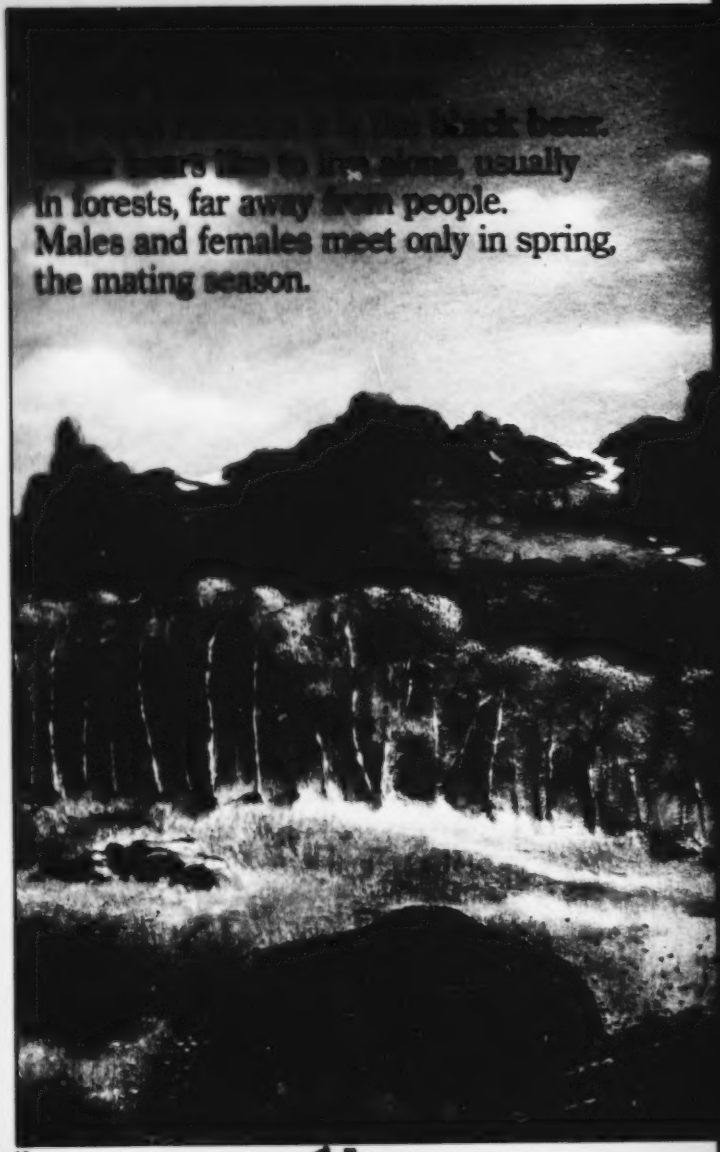
Brown bear
2

Black bear
3

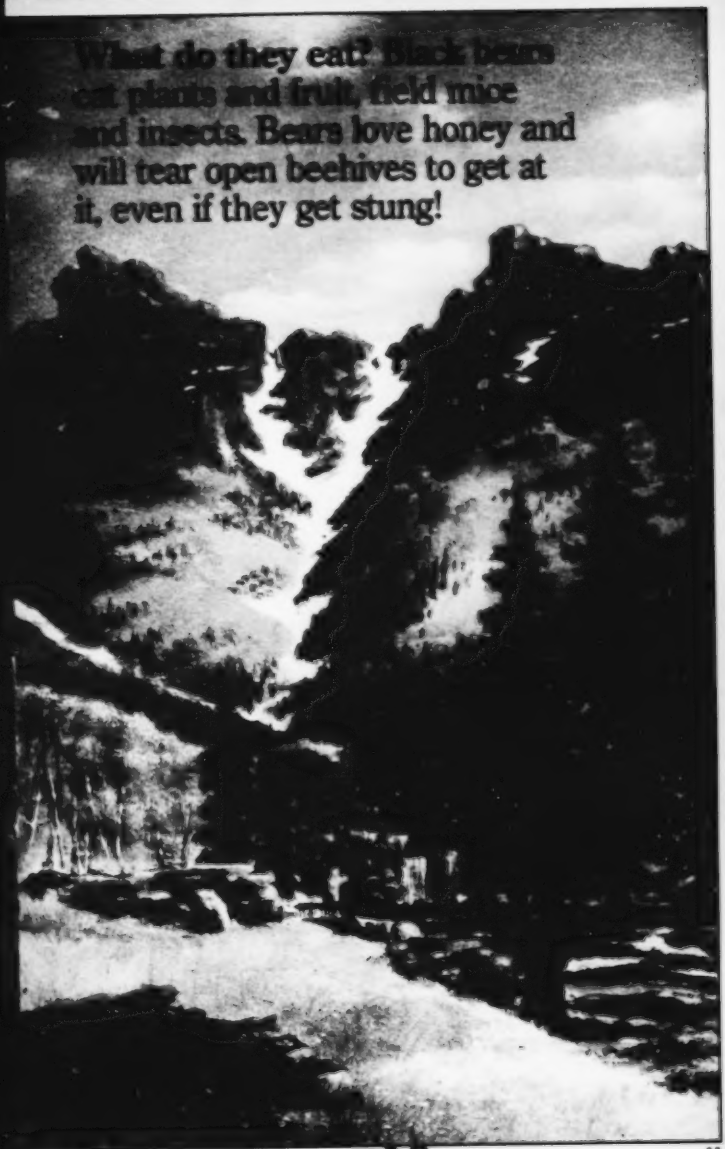
Spectacled bear
4

5) Malaysia, Indonesia
6) India, Sri Lanka
7) Asia
8) China

Sun bear	Sloth bear	Asiatic Black bear	Giant panda
5	6	7	8


black bear.
usually
in forests, far away from people.
Males and females meet only in spring,
the mating season.

$1


What do they eat? Black bears eat plants and fruit, field mice and insects. Bears love honey and will tear open beehives to get at it, even if they get stung!

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By late autumn, a black bear has eaten so much he has become quite fat.

A den for the winter

At the first cold snap, a bear will start digging a hole under a rock or fallen tree. Bears line their dens with dried leaves and grass. Then they crawl inside. When the snow falls, it will cover the entrance to the den. There the bear will **hibernate** (go into a deep sleep) until spring.

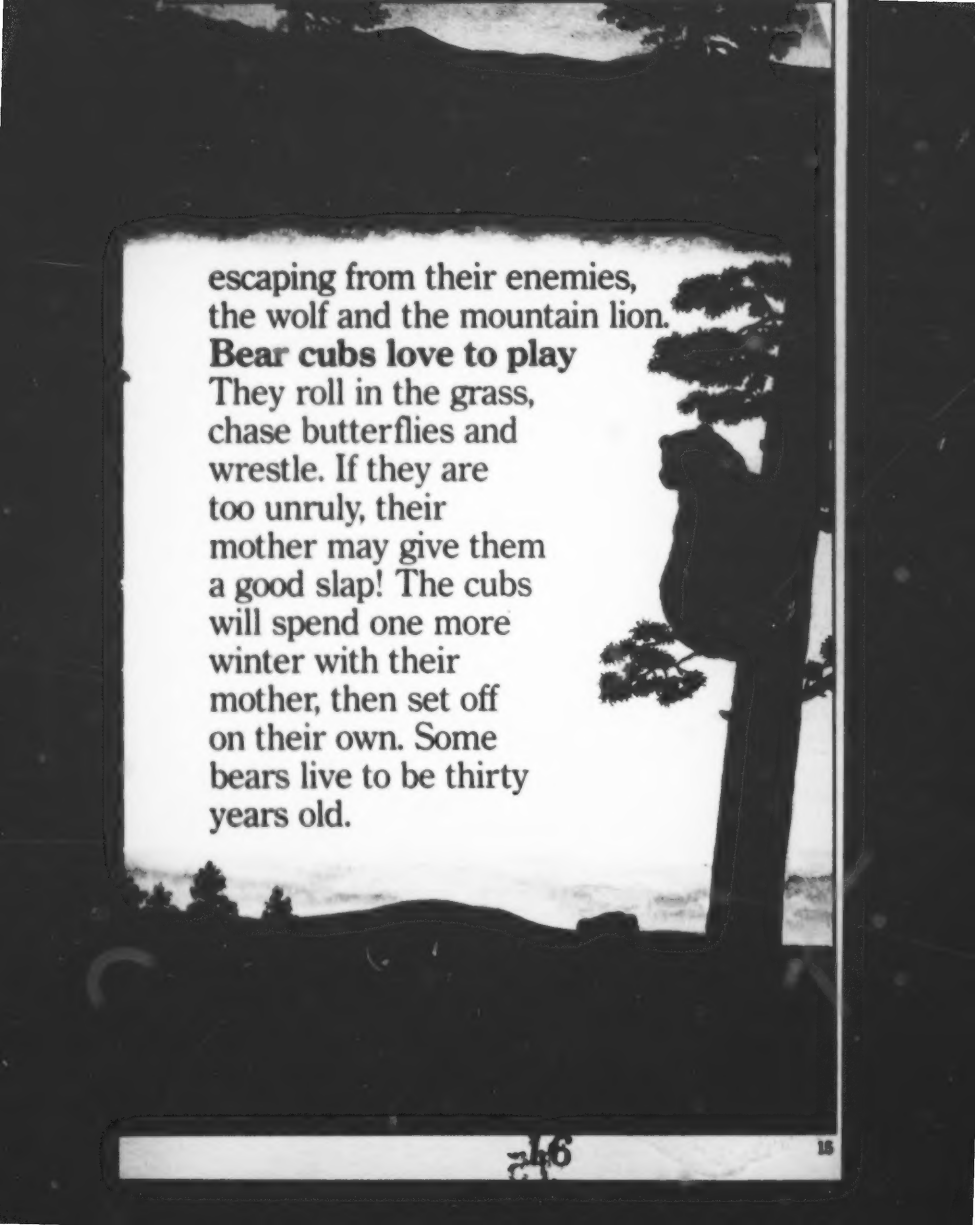
Tiny bear cubs

Inside her den, the female bear, who may weigh over 400 pounds, will give birth to two or three tiny babies. They are as small as kittens, less than half a pound each! But they grow fast. When they are three months old, they will weigh over ten pounds.

When the mother bear emerges from her den in the spring, she is very hungry! She will eat, and show her cubs their new world.

Teaching the cubs

The mother bear teaches her cubs which plants to eat, and how to split open an anthill. They learn to gather berries with their claws. Their mother will take them swimming and tree-climbing. There are good things to eat in trees, like fruit and birds' eggs. And trees are a good place for



escaping from their enemies, the wolf and the mountain lion.

Bear cubs love to play They roll in the grass, chase butterflies and wrestle. If they are too unruly, their mother may give them a good slap! The cubs will spend one more winter with their mother, then set off on their own. Some bears live to be thirty years old.

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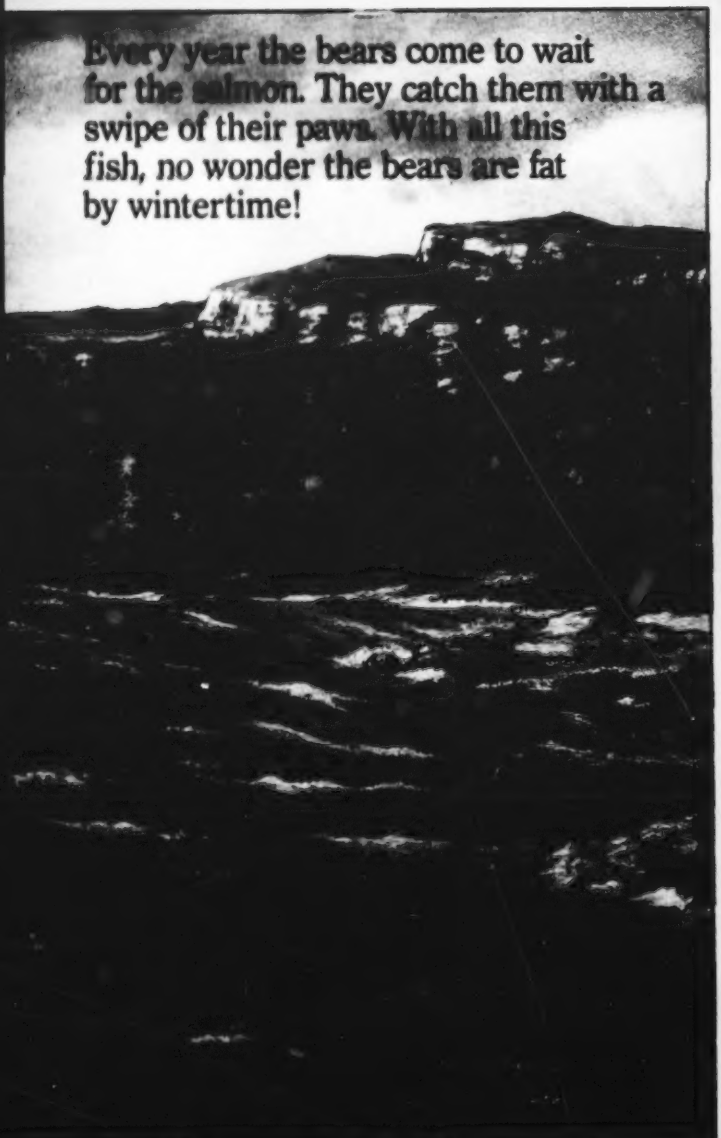
The grizzly bear is a very large brown bear found only in North America. On average, he stands about seven feet tall on his hind legs. The grizzly gets his name from the silver-gray color of his fur. His home is thousands of acres of forest. As he roams, he marks his territory by scratching tree trunks. He is very curious so beware of one visiting your campsite!

Chipmunk

Grizzlies eat berries and small animals like chipmunks, but in the north, they may also attack caribou or wild sheep. They kill with a swift blow of their paws, then hide the carcass under branches until they are ready to eat.

A grizzly and a caribou fight it out.

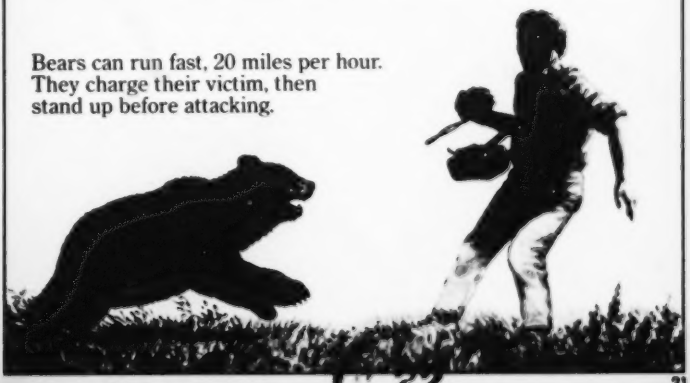
What are all these grizzlies doing in the water? They are fishing for salmon which swim upstream in the fall to lay their eggs.

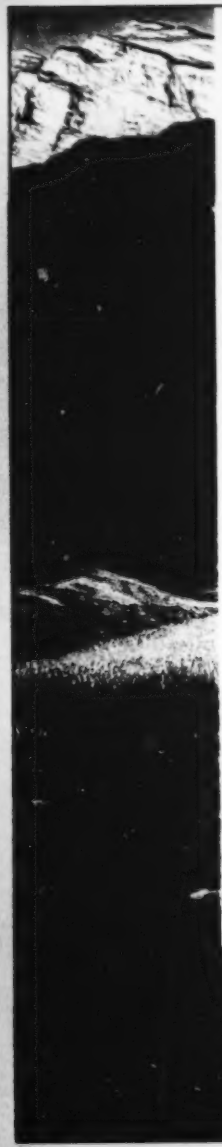

Every year the bears come to wait
for the salmon. They catch them with a
swipe of their paws. With all this
fish, no wonder the bears are fat
by wintertime!

Black bears may find other ways to get food! They often begged from visitors to national parks. But the park rangers say you should never feed (or tease) a bear. Black bears have a keen sense of smell that may lead them to your campsite—and your dinner!

If you visit a park that has bears roaming free, obey the rules. Do what the rangers say. Both you and the bears will be happier.
In spite of their name, not all black bears are black. They vary from black to brown and, some, have white chest marks.

Bears can run fast, 20 miles per hour. They charge their victim, then stand up before attacking.





Himalayan mountain people would rather not meet an **Asiatic black bear!** They are quick to attack humans and horses. They are sometimes called "moon bears" because of the white crescent of fur on their chests.

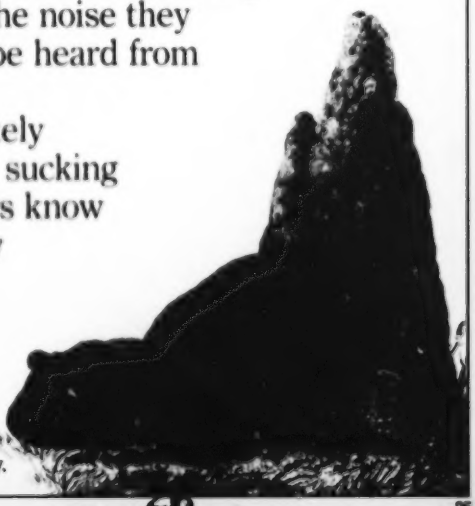
The natives tell stories of the **Yeti**, also called the **Abominable Snowman.** Could these fierce bears have caused the stories?

The spectacled bear lives in the Andes mountains of South America. He is more easy going. Each one has its own pattern of lighter fur around the eyes that may look like eyeglasses. They eat no meat, only fruit and plants. At night, they scamper up trees to find a hiding place in the branches.

The spectacled bear is an endangered species. Only 4,000 remain.

Who's sunning himself in a palm tree? It's the **sun bear**, of course! These are the smallest bears: they weigh less than 130 pounds. Their fur is smooth and shiny like a seal's coat, and the soles of their feet are hairless to make it easy to climb trees. They love coconuts and sugar cane, and know how to split open a tree trunk to find worms or honey.

The sloth bear has a snout a little like a hunting dog's. They love insects, and lick termites out of their nests with their long tongues. The noise they make can be heard from far away! Unfortunately their noisy sucking lets hunters know where they are, too.



The sloth bear gets his name from the sloth, who sleeps a lot and moves slowly.

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Polar bears fish for cod, salmon and skate at the mouths of streams.

A polar bear may weigh three times as much as a lion! That's 1,500 pounds. These inhabitants of the North Pole's icy seas are the largest carnivores (meat eaters) on land. They hunt seals like winter fishermen—through a hole in the ice. When the seal comes up for air, it is killed by the blow of a mighty paw. When there are newborn seals on the ice floes in the spring, the polar bear leaps out of the water to catch them for her cubs to eat.

Where do polar bears spend the winter?

The female digs a hole in a snowbank to hibernate and give birth to her young. Males rarely hibernate.

Polar bears also eat arctic foxes, walruses and reindeer.

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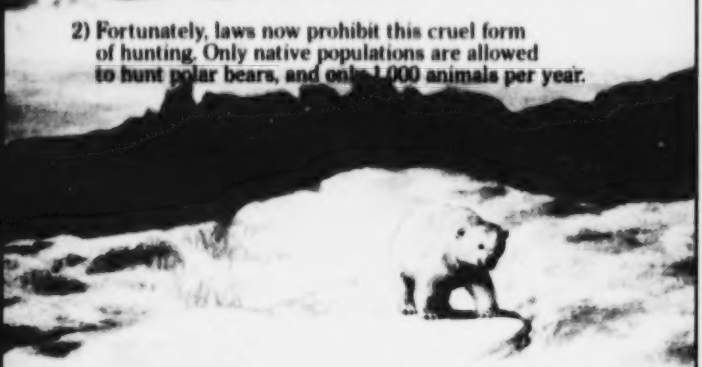
Polar bears are not afraid to **swim in icy water**. They have a thick layer of fat under their skin to keep them warm. They are swift on the ice, too, and can run up steep hills. Stiff hairs on the soles of their feet keep them from slipping. Every year, polar bears travel many miles to follow migrating seals. They cross icy straits or float on drifting ice. The Canadian town of Churchill lies right in their path. They smell food and try to get inside houses. Then they must be captured and taken by helicopter to an ice floe.

The bear enters the trap looking for food. Then he is tranquilized and flown away.

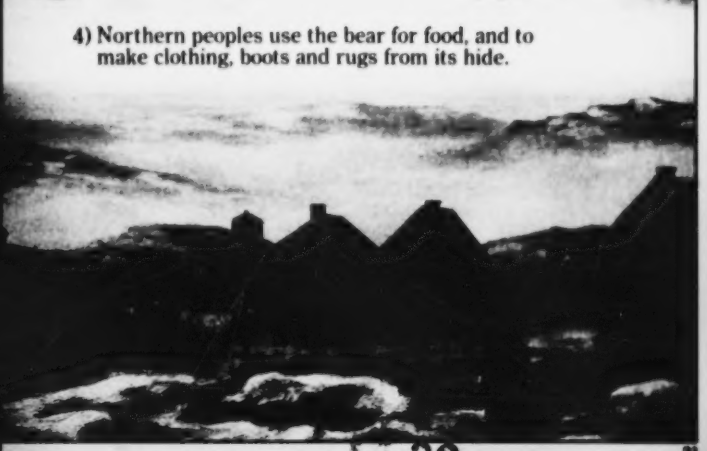
1) Hunters killed many polar bears from their helicopters. Only 25,000 remain.

3) The hunter stalks the bear from behind a screen.

2) Fortunately, laws now prohibit this cruel form of hunting. Only native populations are allowed to hunt polar bears, and only 1,000 animals per year.



4) Northern peoples use the bear for food, and to make clothing, boots and rugs from its hide.

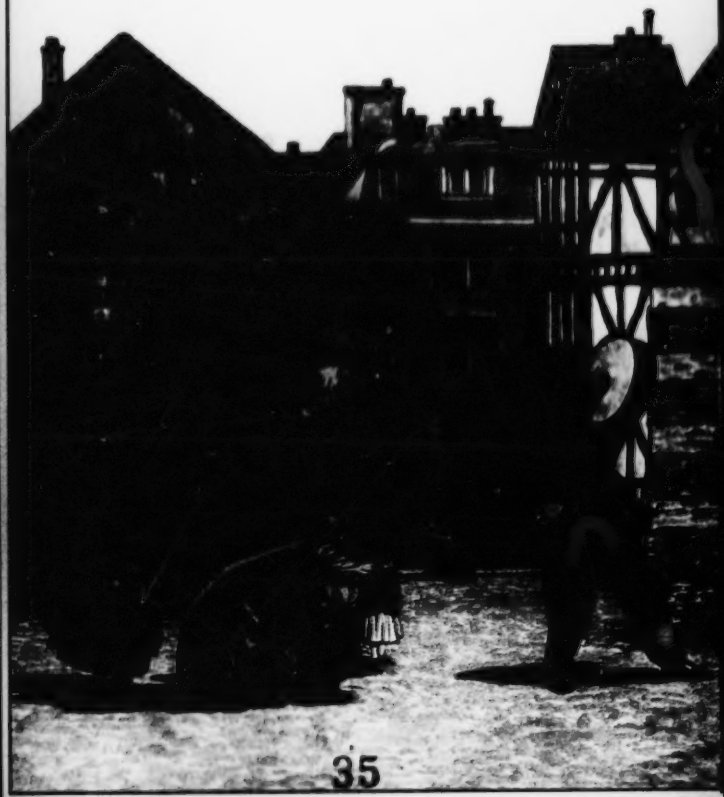


The giant panda was once considered a cousin of the raccoon. Now they are thought to be more like bears. Pandas are fun to watch and attract large crowds at the zoo.
There are only 1,000 pandas left in the mountains of western China. They eat only bamboo, and they eat a lot of it—25 pounds a day! They pick the tender shoots and leaves with the help of their wrist bone, which works like your thumb.

Pandas love to play. They slide down hills and turn somersaults. They are very good climbers and like to nap in the trees after a meal.

Pandas are an endangered species. The forests they live in are being cut down for timber and firewood. The Chinese government has a special program to help save the panda.

Not long ago, in Europe, animal trainers took their bears from town to town. Crowds gathered to watch these intelligent animals dance and balance on balls. Performing bears can still be seen in the circus.



But bears are wild animals.
They should be in a natural
surrounding.

Today they roam free and protected
in many national parks in the U.S.
and Canada. You can find large
numbers especially in the western states
and provinces.

Algy Met a Bear

Algy met a bear,
A bear met Algy.
The bear was bulgy,
The bulge was Algy.

Anonymous

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Bears, Big and Little,
illustrated by Franck Stéphan,
is No. 23 in a series of books of discovery for children five years old and upwards.

- **Are bears as clumsy as they seem?**
- **What does a grizzly eat?**
- **Who is born in the den in winter?**

- **Why do polar bears travel?**
- **How does the mother bear raise her young?**
- **Are bears an endangered species?**

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